



March 24, 2003

Coventry resident George Giusti is sentenced to 41 months in federal prison for marijuana trafficking, possession of illegal explosives and theft of electricity

Giusti is ordered to repay Narragansett Electric \$95,120

A federal judge has sentenced **George Giusti**, of Coventry, to 41 months in federal prison for marijuana trafficking, possession of illegal explosives and theft of electricity. Last July, federal agents and Coventry police found about 504 pounds of Class B explosives and about 62 kilograms of marijuana at Giusti's home and at his landscaping business. Agents also found evidence that Giusti had illegally diverted electricity to his home and business.

United States Attorney Margaret E. Curran announced the sentence, which Chief U.S. District Court Judge Ernest C. Torres imposed on March 21 in U.S. District Court, Providence. Judge Torres ordered Giusti to repay Narragansett Electric \$95,120.41 for the electricity Giusti had fraudulently obtained. Giusti, 53, has also forfeited to the government the business, Diamond Landscaping, 2885 Flat River Road, Coventry, and his interest in his home at 3 Osprey Drive, Coventry.

In December, Giusti pleaded guilty to three federal charges that had been brought in an information filed in November: possession of marijuana with intent to distribute, possession of Class B explosives by a previously convicted felon, and taking electricity by fraud.

Explosives, marijuana

At the hearing at which Giusti pleaded guilty, Assistant U.S. Attorney Mary E. Rogers said that, on July 1, 2002, **Coventry Police** and agents of the **Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms** executed search warrants at Giusti's home and at Diamond Landscaping. In a shed outside the residence, agents found about 504 pounds of Class B explosives, identified as such because they contained black powder and because of their explosive power.

In the basement of the home, agents found about 7.2 pounds of marijuana and what appeared to be a partially dismantled "grow room" for cultivating marijuana. At the landscaping business, agents found a hydroponic marijuana-growing operation with high-wattage lights, electrical boosters, and an irrigation system. Agents also found six, full-size marijuana plants and 582 stems in pots.

Agents of the **Drug Enforcement Administration** joined the investigation after the discovery of the marijuana plants. Assistant U.S. Attorney Rogers said the estimated combined weight of the marijuana seized at the residence and business, if the plants were converted into the equivalent marijuana weight, was 62.07 kilograms.

Electricity bypass

When Narragansett Electric was called to disconnect the electricity to the business, utility workers found an illegal bypass that circumvented the electric meter. Another illegal bypass was found at Giusti's residence. The utility calculated that, between November 1998 and July 2002, Giusti had fraudulently obtained \$95,120.41 worth of electricity through the bypasses.

Business and 50% of the home are forfeited

In a separate but related action, Giusti has ceded to the government his interests in Diamond Landscaping and in his home. In July, the United States Attorney filed a civil forfeiture complaint against the home and business, alleging that they are forfeitable to the government because they were used to facilitate drug trafficking. In pleading guilty to the criminal charges, Giusti agreed to withdraw his claim to both properties. As described in a stipulation filed in December, Giusti's wife, Margaret Giusti, owns a 50 % interest in the home, which is valued at \$420,000. She has agreed to pay the government \$210,000, representing her husband's interest in the home, and will assume sole ownership. The Giustis have ceded all interest in the business, which will be liquidated by the United States Marshal Service.

The case was investigated by the **Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms, Coventry Police**, and the **Drug Enforcement Administration**. The criminal case was prosecuted by Assistant U.S. Attorney Rogers. Assistant U.S. Attorney Michael P. Iannotti is prosecuting the forfeiture complaint.

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